

MDS and AML With Trisomy 8 as the Sole Chromosome Aberration Show Different Sex Ratios and Prognostic Profiles: A Study of 115 Published Cases

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A number of chromosome aberrations occur nonrandomly as the sole aberration in malignant and premalignant hematological disorders. They imply very different prognoses. For most of them the survival consequences have been established. For trisomy 8, which is the most frequent numerical aberration in myeloid disorders, the prognostic implications have not been investigated. In order to clarify survival in patients with trisomy 8 as the sole aberration, the literature was searched for such cases. In 115 patients survival data were available. In 103 (89.6%), a myeloid disorder had been diagnosed. Acute myeloid leukemia (AML) or a myelodysplastic syndrome (MDS) occurred in 100 cases (87.0%). The median survival was found to be 17.1 months. On multivariate survival analysis (Cox), age above 60 and a leukemic diagnosis were found to be independent adverse prognostic indicators. MDS patients survived significantly longer (median 21 months) than AML patients (median 15 months). In MDS age and in AML the trisomy 8 clonal size was an independent prognostic factor. An unexpected observation was a clear male preponderance in trisomy 8 MDS (about two-thirds of cases). In trisomy 8 AML an approximate 1:1 ratio was found. Browsing of Mitelman's catalog confirmed these ratios. *Am. J. Hematol.* 56:224–229, 1997. © 1997 Wiley-Liss, Inc.

Key words: chromosome 8; trisomy; prognosis; sex ratio; MDS; AML

INTRODUCTION

Trisomy 8 is the most frequent numerical chromosome aberration in acute myeloid leukemia (AML), chronic myeloid leukemia, myelodysplastic syndromes (MDS), and myeloproliferative diseases (MPD), but rare in acute lymphoblastic leukemia (ALL) and other lymphoid disorders [1]. In most cases it develops relatively late in the course of disease, often together with other aberrations. The wide variety of hematological diseases associated with trisomy 8 shows that the aberration is not related to any specific pathogenesis. Rather, it is part of mechanisms driving further progression of malignant and premalignant conditions of the myeloid hemopoietic system.

A number of other chromosome aberrations occur in different hematological diseases and, like trisomy 8, are associated with disease progression. When occurring as sole aberration some of them are prognostically ominous (+13, 7q–, t(1;7)) [2–5] whereas others are compatible with a relatively long survival (5q–, +4) [6–8]. However, the survival of trisomy 8 patients apparently has not been specifically investigated. In order to clarify this the published literature was searched for cases of hematologic

disorders with survival data and trisomy 8 as the only chromosome aberration. Trisomy 8 was found to belong to an intermediate group with a median survival longer than those of trisomy 13, 7q–, and t(1;7), but shorter than those of 5q– and trisomy 4. An unexpected finding was that male patients are in massive majority in the trisomy 8 MDS group, whereas in AML the two sexes showed a roughly even distribution.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Patients

The literature was searched for cases with trisomy 8 as the only chromosome aberration and data on survival and

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TABLE I. Distribution on Diagnosis of 115 Patients With Trisomy 8 as Sole Aberration*

Acute myeloid leukemia ^a	n	Myelodysplasia	n	Others	n
M1	7	RA	8	ALL	11
M2	18	RAS	8	MM	1
M3	2	RAEB	17	PV	3
M4	9	RAEBt	4		
M5	7	CMML	6		
M6	5	MDS	1		
M7	0				
AML	8				
Total	56		44		15

*M1–M7: AML FAB classes; AML: no FAB class given; RA: refractory anemia; RAEB: RA with excess of blasts; RAEBt: RAEB in leukemic transformation; CMML: chronic myelomonocytic leukemia; MDS: no FAB specification.

diagnosis. Patient sex, age, and the proportion of metaphases containing an extra chromosome 8 were also noted whenever stated [4,9–50]. Information on survival was obtained in 115 cases. Survival was measured from the time of the first observation of trisomy 8. Data on sex and age were obtained in 115 and 107 cases, respectively. The distribution on diagnoses appears in Table I.

Stratification for Survival Analysis

For survival analysis the material was stratified into a nonleukemic and a leukemic group. The leukemic group included the AML, ALL, RAEBt, and a multiple myeloma case (72 patients in all). The nonleukemic group consisted of 40 MDS and 3 polycythemia vera cases. Further, the material was grouped according to the frequency of trisomy 8 metaphases among those karyotyped (see Table III).

Statistical Analyses

Univariate (Kaplan-Meier) and multivariate (Cox) survival analyses were carried out for all the available parameters (sex, age, diagnosis, and percentages of trisomy 8 metaphases). For other calculations the various series of quantitative data were analyzed for compatibility with the normal distribution using the Kolmogorov-Smirnov goodness of fit test [51]. As none was compatible or could be transformed into a compatible state, non-parametric methods were used throughout for statistical analysis. For 2×2 tables Fisher's exact test was used, and for $2 \times n$ tables the Mann-Whitney test was used. Correlation analyses were carried out with the nonparametric Spearman method [51]. The probabilities of observed distributions on gender were calculated as binomials assuming a true sex ratio of 1:1. All *P* values given in the following are two-sided.

TABLE II. Sex Distribution and Median Survival in Relation to Sex and Diagnosis of 115 Trisomy 8 Cases

	Myelodysplasia syndrome		Leukemias ^a		Total material ^b	
	n	Median	n	Median	n	Median
Men	32	21.0	34	11.0	67	15.0
Women	8	20.0	38	19.5	48	20.0
<i>P</i> ^c	0.0001	0.573	0.168	0.044	0.031	0.125

^aIn the group are included 4 cases of RAEBt and one case of myelomaytosis.

^bIncludes 3 cases (two women and one man) with polycythemia vera not included in the myelodysplastic or the leukemic group.

^cSex ratios: probability of the observed ratio when the 1:1 ratio is used as null hypothesis (binomial calculation); comparison of survival lengths (log-rank calculation).

RESULTS

Distribution on Gender, Age, and Diagnosis

Among the 115 cases of trisomy 8, AML covered 56 and MDS 44 patients, a total of 100 of the 115 cases (87%). Data on age were available in 107 of the 115 cases. Patient age varied between 1 and 86 years (median: 60). Distribution on diagnosis and sex appears in Tables I and II. The male patients were older than the female patients ($P = 0.003$). Relatively more women had leukemic diagnoses ($P = 0.003$). The MDS group shows a massive male preponderance ($P = 0.0001$), which contrasts to the approximate 1:1 ratio in the leukemic group (Table II). There was no gender-related difference in trisomy 8 clonal size ($P = 0.722$).

Survival

The overall median survival was 17.1 months (Fig. 1). The female patients tended to survive longer than their male copatients ($P = 0.125$) (Table II and Fig. 2). The difference seems to be due to a significant female survival advantage in the leukemic group ($P = 0.044$). In the MDS group the medians did not differ clearly between the two sexes (Table II).

As appears in Table III, on univariate analysis age was associated with a marginally significant survival difference (medians 20.0 and 10.5 months, respectively) (Fig. 2). Leukemic and nonleukemic cases showed no survival difference in the univariate analysis. If trisomy 8 metaphases covered at least 80% of the mitotic cell population, survival was significantly shorter (median 8.0 months) than seen in cases with smaller clones (median 23 months) (Fig. 2).

The importance of gender, age, diagnosis, and the trisomy 8 clone size was also investigated with a multivariate analysis. Gender seems to be of no prognostic importance, clonal size came out as marginally significant, whereas age and diagnosis were clearly independent prognostic factors (Table III).

As different factors may be of prognostic importance

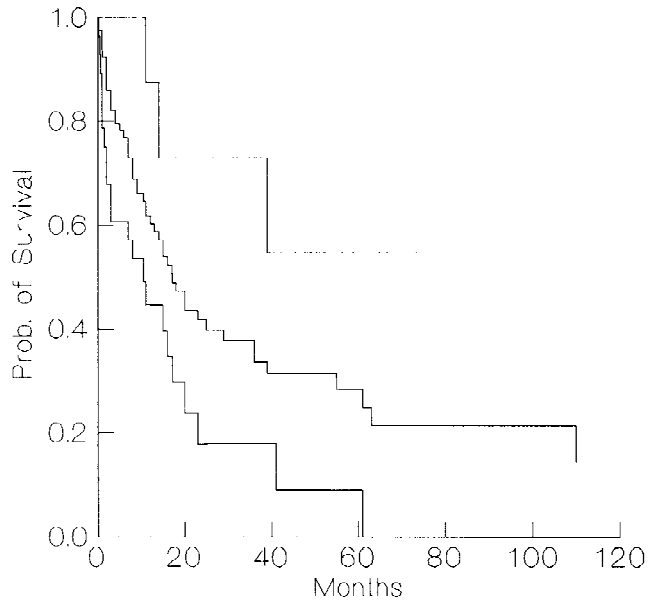


Fig. 1. The three survival curves represent the total material, those with the most favorable, and those with the poorest prognostic profile, respectively. Median survival of the total material ($n = 115$) (middle curve) was 17.1 months. Eight patients below 60 years of age and with a nonleukemic diagnosis had the most favorable prognosis and a median survival above 115 months (upper curve). The poorest prognosis (age above 60 and a leukemic diagnosis) was observed in 28 patients and was associated with a median survival of 8 months (lower curve).

in nonleukemic and leukemic cases, survival was analyzed accordingly after division of the material. Median survival in the nonleukemic and the MDS group was 25 and 21 months, respectively. In the leukemic and the AML group it was 15 and 11 months, respectively. As shown in Table IV, only age was an independent factor in the nonleukemic group. Gender and size of the trisomy 8 clone were without any prognostic relation. In the leukemic group, on the other hand, high trisomy 8 percentages is a clearly adverse prognostic factor. Male gender and age above 60 approached but did not reach statistical significance and so may or may not be independent negative factors.

DISCUSSION

Occurrence of trisomy 8 as the only chromosome aberration in metaphases of bone marrow or peripheral blood cells is associated with malignant and premalignant conditions of the myeloid hemopoietic system. Out of the 115 cases in the present material, no less than 103 (89.6%) had AML, MDS, or polycythemia vera and only 12 had nonmyeloid diseases. Observation of trisomy 8 in hemopoietic cells consequently implies a high a priori probability that the cells have been aspirated from a patient with a myeloid disease.

Distribution on Gender

A surprising observation was the marked preponderance of male MDS patients, which contrasted to the near 1:1 ratio in the leukemic group (Table II). In order to test this result in a larger group, Mitelman's catalog [52] was searched for cases with trisomy 8 as the sole aberration. Patient sex and diagnosis were noted. Out of a total of 403 found, 215 were men. Assuming that the true sex ratio is 1:1, the probability of this distribution was 0.032 (binomial calculation), which is in complete agreement with that of the present material (Table II). AML occurred in 208 cases, 108 of whom were men ($P = 0.095$). This probability is in the same order as that found in the present study ($P = 0.168$). MDS occurred in 135 cases, 87 of whom were men (64.4%) ($P = 0.0005$). This result seems to confirm beyond doubt that a marked male preponderance exists in trisomy 8 MDS and an almost equal sex distribution in AML. Male patients tend to outnumber female patients in most malignant diseases. However, in MDS "males and females are affected almost equally" [53]. This means that the male preponderance seems to be specific for trisomy 8 MDS.

The MDS trisomy 8 ratio clearly contrasts to that of 5q-, which shows the reverse sex ratio in MDS, although the AML ratio is near 1:1 [6] as found in trisomy 8. In both aberrations women survive longer than men. However, whereas longer female survival in 5q- MDS may explain the female preponderance wholly or partly [6], the situation is the other way round in trisomy 8: the male preponderance manifests itself in spite of shorter male survival and so suggests that the higher male prevalence is due to a higher male incidence.

Conceivably, trisomy 8 cells might proliferate more or survive longer in male than in female patients. The fact that there is no gender-related difference in clonal size ($P = 0.722$) contradicts this explanation, however.

Like trisomy 8, trisomy 13 as the only chromosome aberration shows a marked male preponderance [2]. But here also the phenomenon remains unexplained.

Factors of Prognostic Importance

The median survival was found to be 17.1 months. This is shorter than that of the 5q- syndrome (61 months) [6], equals that of trisomy 4 (17 months) [54], and exceeds those of trisomy 13 and monosomy 7 (6 months) [2,4] as well as those of 7q- and t(1;7) (11 months) [3,5].

The available data allowed investigation of the prognostic importance of gender, age, diagnosis, and trisomy 8 clonal size. Hematological data were given in too few cases to permit survival analysis. Multivariate survival analysis proved age and diagnosis to be independent prognostic indicators (Table III). Stratification into a nonleukemic and a leukemic group showed that age is an independent prognostic factor in nonleukemic patients,

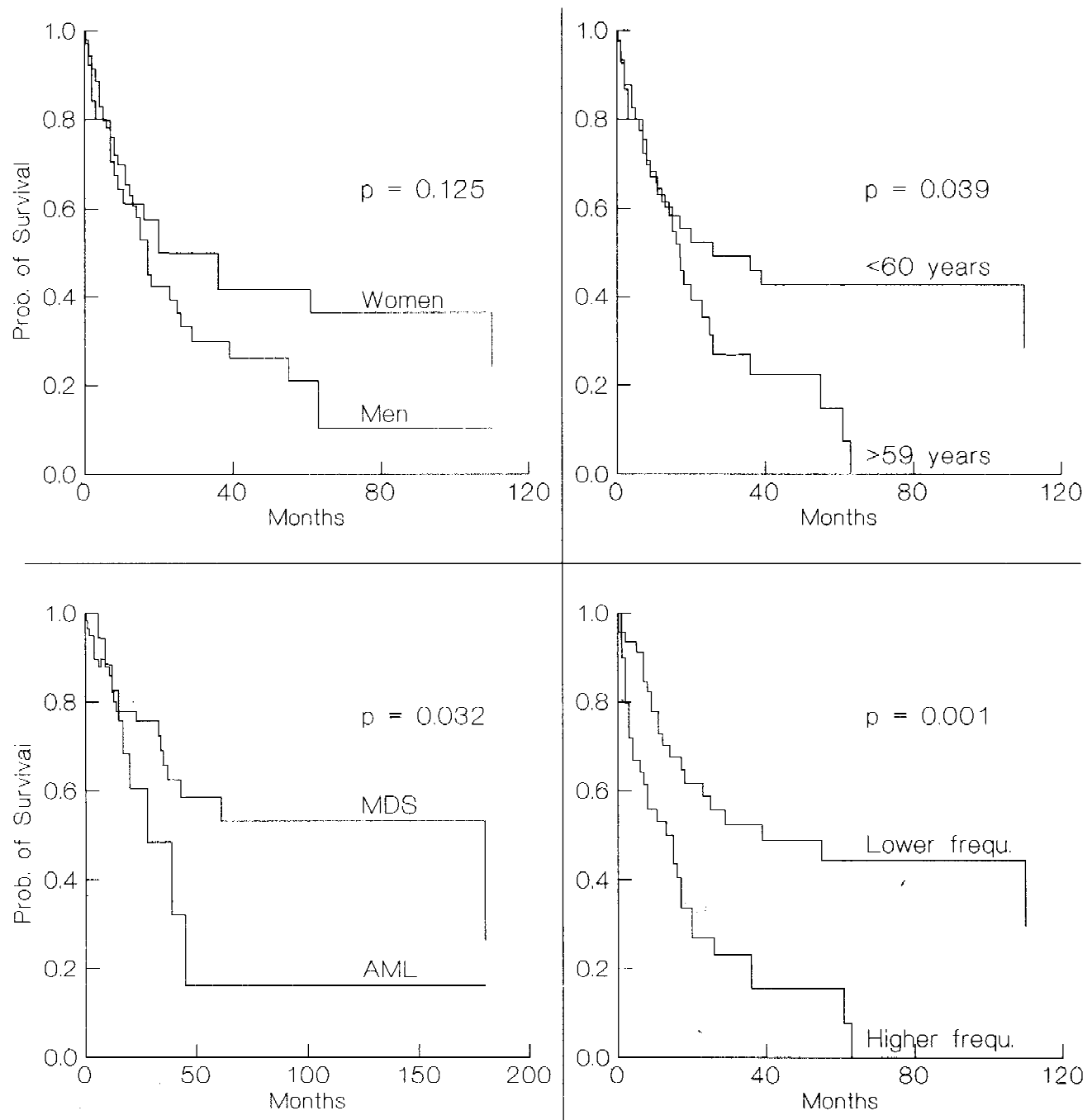


Fig. 2. Survival: relation to gender, age, diagnosis, and extent of the trisomy 8 clone. Top left: Male vs. female patients; median survival 12.1 and 20.0 months, respectively. The difference is not statistically significant ($P = 0.125$). Top right: Patients below 60 vs. patients above 59 years (median survival 20.0 and 10.5 months, respectively) ($P = 0.039$).

Bottom left: MDS vs. AML cases (median survival 21 and 15 months, respectively) ($P = 0.032$). Bottom right: Patients with relatively low frequencies of trisomy 8 metaphases (<80% of those karyotyped) vs. those with high frequencies ($\geq 80\%$) (median survival 23.0 and 8.0 months, respectively) ($P = 0.001$).

whereas gender and trisomy 8 clonal size demonstrated no prognostic importance whatsoever (Table IV). In contrast, in the leukemic group clonal size seems to be the factor of major prognostic importance, whereas gender and age may or may not be prognostically independent.

The different prognostic impact of trisomy 8 clonal size in the two groups is intriguing. The difference is not due to different clonal size ($P = 0.865$). Apparently, clonal expansion is more intimately related to progression mechanisms in leukemic than in nonleukemic pa-

TABLE III. Survival of Trisomy 8 Patients as a Function of Clinical and Cytogenetic Parameters (*P* Values)

Stratification		Univariate analysis	Multivariate analysis
Gender	Men = 1 (n = 67)	0.125	0.128
	Women = 2 (n = 48)		
Age	<60 = 1 (n = 50)	0.039	0.001
	≥60 = 2 (n = 57)		
Diagnosis	Nonleukemic = 1 (n = 43)	0.078	0.003
	Leukemic = 2 (n = 72)		
Trisomy 8: % of metaphases	<80% = 1 (n = 50)	0.001	0.059
	≥80% = 2 (n = 43)		

TABLE IV. Survival of Trisomy 8 Patients With Myelodysplastic and Leukemic Diagnoses (*P* values)

Definition of variables		Univariate analysis	Multivariate analysis
Nonleukemic (43 cases) ^a			
Gender	M/F	0.495	0.571
Age	<60/≥60 years	0.059	0.029
+8 metaphases (%)	<80/≥80	0.220	0.818
Leukemic (72 cases)			
Gender	M/F	0.053	0.076
Age	<60/≥60 years	0.032	0.095
+8 metaphases (%)	<80/≥80	0.001	0.0009

^aForty of the 43 cases had a myelodysplastic syndrome.

tients. Obviously, the same chromosome aberration plays different roles in the processes of MDS and AML progression.

Conclusion

About 90% of cases with trisomy 8 as the only chromosome aberration have AML or MDS. Among those with MDS about two-thirds are men, whereas the sex ratio is approximately 1:1 in the AML group. To my knowledge, significant deviation from 1:1 in trisomy 8 MDS cases has not been observed earlier. Median survival is 17.1 months. Age above 60, a leukemic diagnosis, and (possibly) presence of trisomy 8 in all or the large majority of karyotyped metaphases were independent adverse prognostic factors, whereas gender seemed without importance. The AML and MDS groups show different median survival and different prognostic patterns. Whereas age is an independent factor in MDS, the trisomy 8 clonal size seems to be the far most important factor in AML. This indicates that trisomy 8 is differently related to the progression mechanisms in the two conditions.

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